

TO STUDY, NOT TO HINDER

By PRESIDENT GOMPERS.

The President's proclamation of war between this country and Germany was followed by a feeling and a fear of unknown disturbances in the commercial and industrial world. There were rumors and the beginnings of efforts to make war danger the excuse for changing completely existing standards. Movements began to suspend or to change the standard of the workday and other conditions established to protect the health and to conserve the labor power of workers.

In order to inject something that would act as a steadying force during the first hours after the war, the executive committee of the committee on labor, including conservation of the health and welfare of workers, adopted a declaration which was referred to the advisory commission, and when adopted by that body, to the council of national defense. The council of national defense then adopted and made public the declaration. The purpose of the declaration was to prevent enactment of legislation repealing labor legislation and to prevent unnecessary, ill-advised and hasty changes of standards in private industry. The declaration urged upon the legislatures of the several States which were then in session and would shortly adjourn—some for a two-year period—that before final adjournment they delegate to the governors of their respective States the power to suspend or modify restrictions contained in their labor laws when such suspension or modification should be requested by the council of national defense, and that such suspensions or modifications should be made only for a specified period and no longer than the duration of the war.

In the course of the meeting at which these resolutions were passed, it was clearly stated and understood that the intent of the first resolution regarding possible emergencies requiring modifications in existing standards was to maintain existing standards. The attention of the committee was directed to the fact, and it was generally understood for the basis of our action, that workmen employed in the transportation systems and industrial plants may find their wages of the present time out of proportion to the increased cost of living, and in that case a maintenance of the present status of labor conditions obviously implied an advance in wage scales.

In the discussion on this point which followed in the committee, consideration was given to the circumstances in which, during the war, organized English miners were obliged to demonstrate the necessity of a wage increase, the award being in their favor when they had proved the considerable changes that had taken place in the cost of living. Plainly, in similar cases in this country, higher wage scales must be adopted. Therefore, there were incorporated in the resolutions the recommendation that proposed changes should be made only after investigation and approval by the council of national defense, whose duty in this respect should also be a vigorous maintenance of safeguards to the health and welfare of workers.

The resolutions in question clearly apply only to the large industries and the transportation systems whose operations are essential to the prosecution of the war. They are not intended to cover every petty labor difference in the country, though it is hoped that patriotic regard will be had by all citizens to the need of a possible maximum of industrial peace everywhere. It is, of course, not expected that negotiations or even strikes now on in various occupations shall be wholly suspended, irrespective of the merits of the questions under discussion. On such points each trade union is the judge of the principles which should prevail in its action.

The special attention of trade unions is called to the fact that the resolutions declare that legislatures should uphold and public officers enforce existing labor and health laws, and that the modifications or standards authorized in extraordinary emergencies by the council of national defense should be only for specified periods and in any event not longer than the duration of the war.

With this statement, I feel that each case of differences arising between employers and employees, as well as the trade agreements or other matters now under discussion, may be left to the common sense of men who are willing and anxious to perform their duty to their country in the present grave situation.

I trust that the above will clarify the misunderstanding which really occurred, not so much from what was published in the newspapers, but the scare headlines which had really no relation to the substance of the body of the resolutions.

I take it that in this crisis in our nation's history everyone will do his level best, not only for service, but for a united spirit and action.

RAILROAD WORKERS STRIKE.

Cumberland, Md.—Western Maryland Railroad machinists, apprentices and helpers are on strike for a living wage and better working conditions. The company refuses to treat with organized labor.

"GOOD BY, GIRLS; WE'RE THROUGH."



—Donahy in Cleveland Plain Dealer.

Social Unit Organization

Has Started to Work.—Four Neighborhoods Are Already Organized.—The Plan In Full.

Cincinnati is now ready to begin an experiment in social democracy which will turn towards her the eyes of scientists, sociologists, teachers and philanthropists in all parts of the world. The great work of human helpfulness and human conservation comprehended in the plan of the Social Unit Organization will begin in a few weeks, following the selection of the specific location within Cincinnati, on which there is to be concentrated the best thought of the city with a view to creating a democratic and mutually helpful organization among its people.

Six neighborhoods of the city are now competing to be chosen as the center in which the actual experimental work will be done. A number of other communities are being organized by persons interested in the plan, preparatory to extending invitations to the unit organization. Among these neighborhoods which are now seeking to be chosen are Washburn School district; Lafayette-Bloom School district; Camp Washington; Cumminsville; Mohawk-Brighton and Fairmount.

Invitations received from these communities will be acted upon by the General Council of the social unit organization in Cincinnati upon the basis of the eagerness of the people to obtain the advantage of having the experimental unit within their district, their understanding of the general objects of the plan and the facilities for successful experimentation offered within the community.

After the selection of the district, the initial work will be centralized in one small unit of the community. People living within this small district will then be organized into a working group. It is this organization of the inhabitants within the experimental area which will perform the actual work of carrying out the various tests. There will be established a central meeting place where there will be held clinics, run by local physicians, supervised by the most prominent medical and surgical specialists in the city; there will be given at community gatherings, lectures by social service leaders; helpful advice will be offered by the men and women most thoroughly acquainted with the subjects to be treated in the experiments, but this is as far as outside influences will go. The unit plan is democratic and its people will control the work of solving each of the social problems as it presents itself. The activity of all charitable and social service organization of Cincinnati will be suspended within this unit. Every facility for carrying on the work ordinarily done by these organizations will be placed at the disposal of the community organization and it will be for the people themselves to determine how these facilities shall be utilized.

It is this glorification of democracy, never before known in the administration of charity or helpful service that has made the irresistible appeal to the people of Cincinnati. Its appeal has found interest in the hearts of business

men, wage workers, professional men and women of the working class, as well as those prominent in society and club life. The clergy and laity alike are represented in the councils of the social unit and the wealthy and poor find in this humanitarian project a common ground of interest.

Brief Outline of the Plan.

Results Aimed At.

1. Elimination of waste in philanthropic funds.
2. Development of a model program for social and health work.
3. Creation of an efficient organization for wise social planning.

Method.

A local committee will be selected by the people living within the district where the work is carried on. The approach will be medical in character, the needs of the children supplying the point of attack.

Through a corps of neighborhood social agents or representatives drawn from this district, an attempt will be made gradually to establish contact with every family and individual within it. Social statistics now collected by a score of agencies—federal, state, municipal, philanthropic—will be gathered by this staff which will be paid and educated for its task. The staff will also carry to the people within the district, information which many social agencies are endeavoring to disseminate, but which none can disseminate completely, because it can not reach all the people. (Such educational work is essential to the reduction of infant mortality, to the prevention of tuberculosis and to the curing of other social ills.)

Starting with service to infants and gradually adding first one and then another type of work, the endeavor will be to see how many forms of social work can wisely be drawn into one mechanism and run by one management.

The use of the corps of neighborhood social workers as common field agents, calling in the specialized workers when needed, will prevent the intrusion of many workers into a single home. Seventeen workers visited one home in Milwaukee in a single winter!

Supervision.

The selection of the district and the direction of work therein will rest in the hands of a commission appointed by the mayor of the city and composed of the heads of committees elected by different city groups—doctors, social workers, etc. City departments will also be represented. In this way a consensus of skill in each field can be made available for the work.

Each directing head will be assisted by an advisory committee of national experts, organized and financed by the National Social Unit Organization.

Budget.

The budget provides for administrative expenses; for such investigations, surveys and publicity as are necessary;

for the expenses of the national advisory committees—traveling and hotel expenses, secretarial work, etc.—and for organizing and administering the work of the district station. A copy of this budget will be sent you on request.

WORKERS MUST UNITE TO SECURE JUSTICE

Chicago.—"The organization of labor on trade union lines is labor's natural weapon against the encroachments of capital, and the organized movement must embrace every occupation and industry," writes President Perkins of the International Cigar Makers' union in the official journal of that organization.

"Labor's share in the results of production is inadequate; it does not cover the waste of vital force," he says. "It does not provide for wear and tear; for depreciation of physical force. There is no provision for insurance, for invalidity and old age. The average compensation paid is inadequate to provide for the maintenance of bodily vigor and labor power in the process of production."

"Capital, on the other hand, claims everything; it charges an excessive price for management and personal service; it insists upon regular profits and dividends; it takes into account probable losses. It charges for insurance, depreciation of building and machinery. It adds contingent expenses; some items which could not stand the test of publicity."

"Stock watering is a favorite device in order to conceal the excessive profits gained from operation. Thus the amount of capital invested is sometimes doubled and trebled, by the issuance of bonds and stocks, without the addition of a single dollar to the original capital paid in by the stockholders in the corporation. This process of stock watering tends to increase constantly the share received by capital, and to diminish the proportionate share received by labor."

"The system of distribution of the profits of industry is fundamentally wrong; there is no equitable standard. It is all haphazard. All forces operate in favor of capital and against labor. In a few industries, where corporate power is comparatively weak, and labor organizations are well fortified, labor's share is approximately fair, but not wholly so. In others it is grossly unfair, with no redeeming feature whatsoever."

"With the masses of the people organized in trade unions, labor's share in the production will grow in proportion to its power."

OPPOSE THIRD DEGREE.

Lansing, Mich.—"Third degree" confessions to police officials were scored by the state supreme court in a decision handed down by Justice Stone. In ordering a new trial for a man convicted on "third degree" testimony, the court said:

"Proof of a confession is never admissible unless it is voluntary, and by the word 'voluntary' is meant that the confession must be of the free will and accord of the defendant without coercion, whether from fear of any threat of harm, promise or inducement by hope of reward or method known as 'sweating.'"

TAILORS RAISE WAGES.

Pittsburg, Pa.—Journeyman Tailors' union No. 131 has negotiated a successful wage movement, after a short strike. Rates are increased 10 per cent and improved working conditions are assured.

The successful ending of this movement was possible after insistent agitation that increased the union's membership.

WORTHY LABOR BILL KILLED.

Hartford, Conn.—The house has defeated a bill that would prevent women and minors from being employed in grinding metal on machines or on buffing work, although it was shown this work breeds disease.

Assemblyman Smith spoke against the bill as "a friend of labor." He said the plan was only intended to get the women and children out of the factories and get the men in at better wages. He believed the women could take care of themselves and should not be forced out of their work by legislation.

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